

# The Circuit Writer



NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY  
Northern New Jersey Conference, The United Methodist Church

Spring 1984

Number 21

## THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR

United Methodists who work in ecumenical groups are often asked about the beliefs and practice of our church. The impression that we frequently give is that we are an ordinary, normal church, without any special character of our own. The Bicentennial year gives us a chance to study our roots, both the Wesleyan and the American historical.

Members of our churches are interested in the history of our church, Conference, and local churches. This interest was shown in the success of the Annual Meeting of our Historical and Archival Society. As many of you know, the attendance was in excess of 182 people, and over a quarter of our Conference churches were represented. We can be confident of a growing interest in the Bicentennial as the year moves on.

There are events of varied interest taking place in our Conference. On June 24th, the Tabernacle at Mt. Tabor will be used for a recreation of the style of worship and social event of the 1860's. Dr. Robert Simpson will preach in the morning, and a picnic will be held throughout the afternoon. This will provide an opportunity to experience the practice of Methodists in New Jersey before those changes produced by the immigration of the late 19th Century. An invitation is extended by the Mt. Tabor Church to join in the picnic and see the historic Tabernacle.

The session of the Annual Conference will have the Bicentennial as a theme. Our Conference Preacher will be the Rev. Sidney Callahan, former President of the Methodist Church of Ireland. He will enlighten us about the ties between Belfast and the start of Methodism in New York. The program on the Saturday evening will be on the meaning of Methodist ordination and connectionalism, and the history of minority churches in our Conference. Your Society will also be announcing opportunities to visit and study the various historic churches in the Conference.

The distinctive history of Methodism in Northern New Jersey will be covered by the fourth volume of historical work which will be available at the Annual Conference. This edition will contain articles by Dr. Robert Simpson and Dr. Kenneth Rowe.

We have in our midst an exceptional resource in the Archives Center at Drew University. It has a fine collection of Memorabilia, and books and pamphlets relating to Methodist history and controversies. The development of the distinctive elements of our church and faith can be traced there.

In our Conference there are persons interested in all aspects of our history. Some of them have participated in the workshops sponsored by our Society, and many of them are available for programs at local churches. In response to many requests, summaries of the workshops held at the Annual Meeting are presented in this issue of the Circuit Writer.

Eugene W. Foote

## IS YOUR CHURCH THE OLDEST?

According to the records of Northern N. J. Conference, eleven of our churches were meeting before the 1784 Christmas Conference in Baltimore. The Woodbridge United Methodist Church holds the record in our Conference as the oldest. Meetings were held as early as 1740.

Many of our churches had organized, elected trustees and started to build before 1800. The Flanders United Methodist Church organized in 1789 and holds the record in this category.

A third category of "oldest church" is the age of the present building of worship. Many of the early churches were sold or demolished and then rebuilt. We believe that the Stockholm United Methodist Church is our oldest church building where since 1826 the congregation is still worshipping.

Mrs. Barbara B. Tomlin, 35 Wolf Hill Drive, Warren, N. J. 07060 is researching this third category. She would appreciate any information your church histories reveal on old buildings still existing such as parsonages, carriage houses and even homes of members where historic events may have happened.

## LOCAL CHURCH HISTORIES

Each year we recognize excellent church histories which are published.

The winners for 1982 histories were announced at the Annual Meeting in January.

First place - Hope United Methodist Church.

Second place Hackettstown United Methodist Church.

1983 Church History Awards will be made at the June 1984 Annual Conference.

We encourage you to write your church history. Surely there is someone in your congregation that has the interest and the talent. New churches have history to record as well as the older churches. Histories published by churches should be forwarded to Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe, Methodist Librarian, Drew University, Madison, N.J. 07940. These copies are kept for reference and are used to make the award selections.

## NORTHERN N. J. PUBLICATION-1984

This new publication will include the Thomas Morrell Journal, late 1700 to 1830 by Dr. Robert D. Simpson and Maverick Strains in Methodism by Dr. Kenneth Rowe. 1984 members of the Archival Society will receive this journal as a benefit of membership. Extra copies will be offered at a reasonable price.

## CELEBRATING A MAJOR PUBLISHING EVENT

Our own Dr. Robert D. Simpson has written and transcribed the journals for "American Methodist Pioneer, the Life & Journals of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, 1752-1827."

We recommend this publication for your reading pleasure in this year of American Methodism celebration.

## SHARING THIS CIRCUIT WRITER

This issue of The Circuit Writer is being sent to Historical and Archival Society Trustees and Members, Clergy, Church Historians, and Lay Members of Annual Conference. There are others in the local churches who would be interested in this issue. Please share with them by posting this issue, by your local church newsletter and bulletin and by word of mouth.

## REPORTS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING WORKSHOPS AND PROGRAM

The Annual Meeting of the Society was held on January 15, 1984. A highlight of the program was "A Visit From Susanna Wesley," presented by Mrs. Beverly Swanson. In it she portrayed not only the personality of Susanna Wesley, but also the thought and the method that formed her and her many children.

The eight Workshops were a new feature of the Annual Meeting. Reports on all of them will be presented in the Circuit Writer. Four are presented here.

**Workshop 3 The Heritage of Women in Methodism** - Dr. Carolyn DeSwarte Gifford, the Women's History Project Coordinator at the United Methodist Archives Center, Drew University.

The history of women in the U. M. Church has been neglected, with many records kept and published about men, but very few about women. There is now resource material available. A two volume set is "Women in New Worlds" edited by R. Keller, H. Thomas and L. Queen; Abingdon, 1981, 1982. A study book, "Conduct Becoming a Woman," used by the United Methodist Women is now out of print, but may be reprinted. Three booklets available at the Archives Center are about Susanna Wesley, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Frances E. Willard. The Bibliography written by Dr. Kenneth Rowe is an excellent resource.

One Audio Visual is available: "The Deaconess Story" which is about the deaconess movement in our country.

Dr. Gifford requests that any information about women who are presently serving or have served the church be sent to her. Oral histories are welcomed. She may be reached at (201) 822-2787 or 822-2826. This is urgent, as the funding for the Woman's History Project is funded only through Dec. 1984.

**Workshop 4 The Power of Music in the Methodist Movement** - Dr. Anthony Godlefski

Wesleyan roots of Methodist experience were displayed. The Wesleys dreaded empty tradition in music, and turned from anthems, chanted psalms and the metrical versions of the psalms, to a music that appealed, especially through words of a personal nature. Samuel Wesley and other members of the family wrote hymns, but Charles, who was creative and liked fun, wrote about 9,000 hymns from his heart. By use of hymns, John Wesley and those who followed him reached for persons' hearts. Wesleyan hymns were distinctive in that they were:

1. Personal Examples are #1, "O for a Thousand Tongues" with its many personal pronouns, and #126 "Jesus, Lover of My Soul".
2. Invitational #102 "Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast" is typical in its use of the word "all".
3. Biblical #388 "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" and #360 "Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus" are examples.
4. Devotional #439 "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" is an example.

**Workshop 5 Recapturing History Through Oral Records** - Rev. Thomas Trainor

In recovering oral records the thing to do is 'Listen!' Talk with older members of the congregation and tape their remarks if they are willing. Write down the stories about events which occurred years ago, or of experiences with specific person in the church. The oral history concerns that "history that falls through the cracks." Unless it is recorded by some means it is lost forever. Old timers will help to plug the cracks, if they can be gotten to talk.

Workshops continued

Workshop 7 Worship in the Bicentennial Year - Rev. Fred D. Hoffman

The reference to use is the Methodist Bicentennial Plan Book which contains plans for services throughout the year (Advent, Christmas, Aldersgate, etc.) and a listing of resources for study (pp 57-94). Other references are usually available through the minister. Some are:

- a. Robert Hunt-Bicentennial Moments
- b. Endless Line of Splendor-a history of Methodism
- c. Devotions and Prayers in the Life of John Wesley.
- d. K. Rowe-Bibliography.
- e. Selections of Messages from John Wesley/Francis Asbury
- f. John Wesley's Message for Today

Audio-Visuals

- a. From the Word Go-Film on the history of the church, rental \$25.
- b. Video on the Service at Lovely Lane
- c. TV Tape: The Gift of Song in America.

Also the Bicentennial Resources Upsate sent to ministers.

Next issue - We expect to review workshops 1 - 2 - 6 - & 8

1984 Officers of the Trustees and  
the Historical & Archival Society.  
Northern N. J. Conference

President-Rev. William T. Noll  
24 Montrose Ave., Verona, N.J.  
07044

Vice-Pres.-Mrs. Constance Brewer  
Secretary- Mrs. Alma Cap  
Treasurer- Conference Treasurer

Appointments-

Circuit Writer - Connie Brewer  
Bicentennial Coordinator-  
Eugene Foote

Financial Secretary Louise Capron  
Membership - Edna Von Dreele  
Sales of Society Publications-  
Paul Spiecker

The Trustees of the Historical and Archival Society meet at least four times a year. There are 24 elected members plus 4 ex-officio members. The meetings are scheduled at churches of historical interest or the Archives Center, Drew University.

HISTORICAL & ARCHIVAL  
SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Renew your membership or join for  
the first time.

\$10.00 per calendar year  
\$100. for a life membership

DATES TO REMEMBER

June 2 at Annual Conference  
Drew University

HISTORICAL PRESENTATION

June 24th at Mount Tabor

CAMP MEETING at the Tabernacle  
PICNIC during the afternoon  
Style of 1860.

January 13, 1985 ANNUAL MEETING  
of the HISTORICAL & ARCHIVAL  
SOCIETY.